

Bowdoin College

Bowdoin Digital Commons

Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth and
Reconciliation Commission: Statements

Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth &
Reconciliation Commission Archive

6-4-2014

Statement by April Tomah collected by Rachel George on June 4, 2014

April Tomah

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.bowdoin.edu/maine-wabanaki-trc-statements>

Recommended Citation

Tomah, April, "Statement by April Tomah collected by Rachel George on June 4, 2014" (2014). *Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Statements*. 97.
<https://digitalcommons.bowdoin.edu/maine-wabanaki-trc-statements/97>

This Statement is brought to you for free and open access by the Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth & Reconciliation Commission Archive at Bowdoin Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Statements by an authorized administrator of Bowdoin Digital Commons. For more information, please contact mdoyle@bowdoin.edu.



General Information

Private or Public Statement? - Private

Statement Provider: April Tomah

Date: 6/4/14

Location: Nick Sapiel Building, Penobscot Nation

Previous Statement? No

Statement Gatherer: Rachel George

Support Person: Robert Polchies

Additional Individuals Present: N/A

Recording Format: Video

Recording Length: 51:18

Recording

RG: Alright so the date is June 4th, 2014. Uh we are here at the Nick Sap building at Penobscot Nation. My name is Rachel George and I'm here today with... would you mind saying your name?

AT: April Tomah.

RG: And?

RP: Robert Polchies.

RG: Fantastic. Um, the file number is P-201406-00050. April have you been informed, understood and signed the consent form?

AT: Yes, I have.

RG: Fantastic. And I have to let you know that if at any point during your statement today you indicate that there is a child or an elder in need of protection, or that there is serious risk, including death to an identifiable person or group, including yourself, that that information may not be protected as confidential. Do you understand?

AT: Understandable.

RG: Are you ok going forward?

AT: Yep.

RG: So you can start wherever you feel most comfortable.

AT: I guess I'll start when I was... I was told these stories, I wasn't actually... I was there but I don't remember. I guess, my first time being put into foster care was three months old. I was left in a crib for three days with no food, whatever. The only reason why they found me was they heard a squeak. And my aunt came in and they took me from my mother and they put me with a foster family. Which, they were great for a while. They were amazing. They're still my parents now. I still call them mom and dad. And I was there for a short time back to my mother, and then I was bounced around a lot. I don't remember a lot of it but I was bounced around my whole life between my mother, my foster parents and my grandmother.

Um, I guess my first memory is of my foster parents. Um, they were amazing... so I thought. But... but I guess they were physically abusive, I don't remember a lot of it. But, I was told that I was... I remember spankings yes, bouts, whatever. And I was in pageants and all that great, wonderful, the baton twirling and all that. And my foster mother was very adamant about me practicing things, I used to have to practice three hours a night, before homework, before eating, before... I couldn't even stop to use the bathroom. There was many times that I actually wet myself because I couldn't hold it. Um... and she, I guess, the abuse got bad. I think I just blocked a lot of it out. I mean, I remember, again I would get spanked. I guess it was a lot of times that they'd throw me against walls and stuff. I was told this by many people, not just one. I do remember that one time she went to spank me, threw me over her lap and I hit my face on something and I put my tooth through my lip. Plus my adoptive father was physically abusive to my mother. So my first memory of that was coming off the school bus to my mother with a broken nose. Comin' right out of the house. I guess that's the first memory of that. And being um, mentally abused by my biological mother. I was always told that I was nothing, I'm useless. I'll never amount to anything. You're ugly. You know, all the... stupid shit. For a long time I believed it. I still have trouble. Um, the abuse, the... um I guess after a while of the abuse with my foster family, somebody spoke up. I got pulled out of there. I got sent to, I think it was my grandmother's, and it was good there but then I decided 'ooh, I want to go stay with my real dad,' I didn't really know my real dad. And I was there for a while. It was Ok.

RG: How old were you at the time?

AT: Nine.

RG: Where you with your foster family from when you were a baby to when you were 9...

AT: No, it was back and forth here and there, everywhere, wherever. Basically I guess I grew up feeling not wanted, that I was a burden to whoever had me. They just had me for the money or whatever, so. But at nine years old I finally actually got to know my dad. I love my real dad. He's an awesome man. But his wife didn't like me because I have a brother that uh, well, I had a brother. My brother passed away. Um, we're a month apart. He was born in March and I'm in



April. So she didn't like me very much. And the mental abuse I dealt with from her was pretty bad. 'Oh, you're just like your mother, you're a whore'. Nine years old, you know, being told you're a whore. 'You'll be nothing but a whore.' Um, and I guess the worst abuse was when I was... after that, cause her and I didn't get along, I decided to live with my godmother. And they ended up adopting me. You know I was all excited, yes, my godmom. Cause she's my godmother, my mother and my aunt all in one. And the abuse I suffered there was hard. I was sexually molested for many years by my foster brother. Um, it went on for many years... My foster father... not my foster father... my adopted father did things too. Um, but the physical abuse was hard. I would be... if I said the word pig, I would get beat. There was times that I'd go to school in the summer, or warmer weather in full pants and full shirt because I'd have bruises on my back all the way down my legs. Because she would take wooden dowels, say about an inch thick, and break them over my back and my legs. I was the youngest in the house for a while. My brother, my other foster brother, cause there were two foster brothers... not, foster, I'm sorry... my adoptive brothers, and one adopted sister. My adoptive sister and me got along pretty good. But my oldest adoptive brother put me through a wall. And then I got beat for breaking the wall. It was my fault. He was a football player. He's a big boy, you know? And he thought it would be funny to tackle me through a wall. I still have problems because of that. And he... the physical abuse was so intense. I'd get daily beatings. You know? Just to beat me. It wasn't like um too, cause I did something wrong. So then I started rebelling, saying if you're going to beat on me I'm going to do wrong. Um, then when I was twelve years old I was raped. That was the first time. No, I'm sorry, no, I was nine the first time I was raped. Second time I was twelve. Um, I went back to my foster parents. Oh, no I went back to my mother, my biological mother. And the abuse continued, the mental abuse just was the same. 'You're useless you're nothing.' I raised my brothers and sisters while I was there. I did everything. My mother drank. My mother played bingo. My mother literally was never there. Or if she was she was sleeping on the couch. I did all the cleaning. I did all, cause I was the oldest. I'm the oldest in that family. (00:10:00) I did everything. And it was you know, I had to grow up too fast. That's why I let my kids be kids. You know? I can't see my children doing half the shit that I had to do...

Um, living with my mother for.... I was in eighth grade. I graduated 8th grade, went to high school. When I got into high school, my mother decided 'oh...' Oh I'm sorry, no. I ended up decided... or she through me out at 14. Through me out and I went to live with my foster family again which was great for a couple weeks. But then my mother decided she wanted another baby. And I was pimped out for her. A few years till I had eight miscarriages and was told I'd never have children. That hurt really bad, you know? My mother and I, my foster mother and I have had discussions about everything, and I forgave her for stuff that went on. I forgave them all for what they've done to me. I had to for me. I don't care what they needed, I needed it. But...

RG: When you say your mother do you mean your biological mother or your foster mother?

AT: Foster, I'm sorry, yea... My foster mother. She wanted a baby. You know? My youngest... she ended up getting one but it was through the foster system. You know? And I was, me and my brother Walter were the only ones that weren't adopted. The other three were. Now she's got another one. I mean she's an amazing woman. I mean, she's grown. She's nothing like she ever was back then. She doesn't even spank. After I was taken from her she, cause, she really had a hard time when they took me from her. She, and we're really close now. So... but... Being pimped out by your own mother... was... is... you know? It diminished me. I was just there. I wasn't even a person anymore. And throughout high school, you know, I ended up meeting someone at 18, I hadn't graduated high school, so I took off. I had to get away. I ran away with him down to South Carolina. And into another abusive relationship. You know? Charlie was a good man at first. But then when I got pregnant um, he was never physically abusive. He would never hit me, but the mental abuse and emotional abuse was... nobody else is going to want your ass, you know, you do what I tell you. You know, I was nine months pregnant, I was ready to have my child and I was still lining ceramic tile because he didn't want to leave me at the hotel by myself. He didn't trust me. You know? Just... then I had my son. And the abuse continued. Just... my first son, he was my miracle baby. You know, they told me I'd never have kids so.

RG: How old were you?

AT: When I was told that?

RG: When you had your first son?

AT: I was twenty. Yea. I was twenty. But because of the rapes and everything they told me I'd never have kids. I had so much scar tissue that they thought I'd never have kids. Um, so I got pregnant. I was actually signed up for the army to go into the army and they didn't catch I was pregnant and you know, whoops. But I had my miracle baby, my boy, my oldest. Who will be sixteen this year. And um, he... Charlie was... he had more of a hold on me then. He really had a hold on me. We stayed... we lived in hotels here and there and everywhere. He was a compulsive gambler. For a month me and my son ate nothing but ramen noodles and Kool-Aid. That's how bad it was, and he was working laying ceramic tile. So I escaped and come to find out I was pregnant with my second, with my second boy... And um, after a while I went back... we kept going back and forth, back and forth, thinking yea, you know it's my kids father, I need to try to make it work. I have to for my kids. For my kids. But... I ended up leaving for good, or actually I threw him out cause we were living on township back then. I threw him out and I ended up with my daughter's father. We were together for... I was still pregnant when... no I'm sorry I had my son and it was a few weeks after Billy was born that I threw Charlie out and Mike and I had gotten back together cause we were together before... Six months later my son passed away. It's probably the hardest thing I ever had to do, even all the abuse, everything I went through. Losing my son, just... I thought it killed the rest of me. There wasn't much there left. There wasn't... I wasn't anybody. You know? I just was a body. When my son died, that killed me. That killed the rest of me. I thought.... then shortly after that I got pregnant with my daughter, not on purpose, but.... Then after my daughter was born I got into the drugs really bad. I for... what, ten years... I shot up. I... when a needle went into my arm, I think I was trying to self destruct. Now that I think about it. I couldn't do it... I tried to



kill myself quite a few times and it never... I never did it. It never happened. I've sliced my wrist. I've tried to hang myself. I've tried to overdose myself on purpose, quite a few times on that. I just wanted it all to stop. But something always happened that it didn't take. Um, I wanted to die. I really wanted to die. I was thinking ... maybe if I keep using it will finally kill me. And I lost my daughter. The state took my baby girl from me. That was it. I just didn't care anymore. And they gave her to her father. Her father and I were both using together. They took her from my home because it was an unsafe environment. I was honest with the state worker. Told them that I was buying Suboxone on the street, so I wouldn't have to get high. So I could take care of my child. But the state worker decided... 'nope lets pull her out of there' and gave her to her father who was still using. Shooting up in front of my child. My daughter... at, what was it? At nine years old could tell me how to shoot up. I went to Township Child Welfare. Trinity gave a statement, and it took a year and a half for the state even to talk to my daughter. And when I was there, the.... Tribal child welfare did their job. But the state didn't. My ex husband's been investigated seven, eight times. And my daughter is still there. I keep fighting and fighting to try to get something done with that. Cause I don't have the means right now just to take her. Right now I'm barely keeping my own head above the water. Yeah, I'm working, whatever, but I need to get my child out of that situation. But... I'm at my wits end. Truthfully, with that whole situation. He's saying he's not still using. But I know better. He gets his own prescription. Just cause it's that doesn't mean he's not shooting it up. I'm not stupid. I know him too well.

But just... um... I have no faith in the state anymore. The last one she even came... Bert was there, we sat at the house and wait and talked. He was stealing money from his parents and he told them he was! He told them he was! And he was buying Oxy 30s on the street. I was buying Suboxone and they took her from me. He's an ex police officer, he's an ex cop. He was a county sheriff, he was a Township cop, he was chief of police in Princeton. And his parents have all kinds of money. I'm fighting that. That's... it's frustrating.

RG: Is he native?

AT: No.

RG: Does your daughter meet the census?

AT: No.

RG: Is that why... ok... that makes more sense.

AT: I mean, I'm trying to... I gotta try to do the whole up Tobique or the Maliseet band but... yea, no. My kids aren't. I'm only a quarter Passamaquoddy and the rest is Maliseet so... I mean, if anything... If I couldn't take her she'd go to chief Joe, her godfather. So... it's just frustrating,

the whole state. Plus I think where he's white, and I'm native, you know, that was part of the whole thing with the state, why they haven't done anything. It took them a year to investigate someone shooting up in front of a child. If that was a native... (*snaps*) gone. Done. No. Especially where he's a cop, ex-cop... Yea, he was fired, but still. He still has that on him. Yea, he's been... he's actually been convicted of trafficking. And he still has my child. I got clean. Actually in a few days it will be a year and six months ago. Somebody took an interest and told me, 'yea, come up I'll keep you out of trouble' and it's been that way ever since. I've been out of trouble, well not completely... (*smiles*) repercussions of my past, yea. I got arrested a few times and found stuff from way back. But, I just... Um, my whole life has just been one big abuse and finally I've stepped away from that. If I wasn't being abused by a parent it was the person I was with. Or, someone else. Its actually nice having people around me that only want to help. I guess that's it.

RG: Can I ask you a couple questions?

AT: Sure.

RG: Um, the foster family that you were placed with. Um, were they non-native or were they native?

AT: Um, my dad was.

RG: Uh... ok.

AT: It was on the reservation, but my foster mother is non-native. But my mother is... I mean my father is... (*shakes head and laughs*)

RG: It's okay, it's that kind of day!

AT: Yeah. We both are having that kind of day!

RG: Yeah. So you were living on the reservation?

AT: Yes.

RG: And that's at township?

AT: Mhmm.

RG: Um, and your adoptive siblings, were they...

AT: This reservation. (*indicating Penobscot*)

RG: This reservation. Ok.

AT: Actually two houses up from where we live now.



RG: Ok. And they were... were they, your adoptive parents biological children?

AT: Yes.

RG: And you were the youngest in that family, right?

AT: Yes.

RG: And biological siblings?

AT: Um, oh goodness gracious. *(Smiles)*. Um...

RG: You don't have to name any names or just... I'm wondering...because you said...

AT: Well, there's nine of us on my biological father's side.

RG: Ok. Big family.

AT: And then, I'm the ol-... well, well I was the youngest, but I'm in the middle now. And then my mother's side I'm the oldest of four.

RG: Um, did anybody tell you or do you remember when you first went back, when you first were moved out of your foster family's home, do you remember what that was like?

AT: Oh, yea.

RG: And did you go back to your grandparents' house or your biological mother's house?

AT: I went to my grandmother's.

RG: Ok.

AT: Um, what happened was, I remember one day... my aunt Kathy grabbed me and said 'why don't you come over and play with Josh.' I said 'Ok, alright,' you know, I'm nine years old. Lets go. I went over and then all the sudden there was somebody there and my mother tried to come get me and she was trying to push her way through the door and I just remember I had to yellow windbreaker on and I kept playing with the thing that's... I remember that... and my mom screaming 'April, April!' Cause I was bruised up. A lot... some of my bruises also were from baton... I'm a klutz *(laughs)* although I was really good at it. I was really good at baton. I was number one in the state, but... I just remember her trying to claw her way though the people and them trying to push her out. And then my aunt Kathy grabbing me and saying 'you

don't have to go back there anymore.' I didn't understand. You know?' Well where do you want to live now?' I'm like, 'what do you mean? That's my mom.' 'No April, you can't go back there.' I said, 'well I want to go see my gram. Gram will help. Gram will tell me what's going on.' And I got to Grams. My grandma was an amazing woman. I loved my grandma. I love, love her. She was the rock in my family. After she died I was just... It was hard. But um, that's basically what I remember that day.

RG: Just sorry, I'm understanding, from the time you were three months old until you were nine you were with your foster family?

AT: Off and on. (*RG: off and on*) It was... I'd go back to my biological mother. I'd go back to them. Or I'd go stay with this person or that person. You know, it was whoever would take me.

RG: Mhmm.

AT: But my foster family always wanted me, but being a foster family you get taken in and out.

RG: Yep. Is there anything else you want to tell me about your experiences growing up?

AT: Um... not that I can think of. I mean just the abuse was all I can think of.

RG: Can you tell me a little bit more about when the state got involved with your daughter?

AT: Um, I had just gotten out of rehab. Um, we were living in Bangor for a while. And then um, we had moved home, but my biological mother said we couldn't stay there. I said Ok, I went to stay with my friend Jackie and Mel. They're lesbians but they're non-tribal members. We were sitting down and there was a knock on the door and it was this lady from the state. She said I need to speak to you April. Ok, so we went out to the car, we sat in her car. Did the interview. I thought that was kind of inappropriate, truthfully. Sat in her car and did the interview. She told me we got a complaint that your daughter is unsafe. "What the hell do you mean? My daughter is safe. I take care of my child." "Oh, you're using drugs." I looked at her I said, 'well you know what, I don't have the means to get down to the suboxone clinic every day.' Cause I was trying to do the suboxone or whatever. I went through methadone, I went through suboxone, I've done it all. Um... I couldn't get down there every day. I didn't have the money. And uh, I tried the WHCA and I was on something happened, and they wanted me... they couldn't transport me. I was on suspension or whatever. Cause I forgot to put something in. I said whatever. So I couldn't get down there. So I said, look, I'm buying it on the street. I says and I'm not taking a lot so I'm sedated or whatever. I'm taking.... (*covers mouth*), okau never-mind, I thought I had to sneeze. I'm taking enough so I can function and take care of my child. I said, 'Most of the time I'm sitting down at the lake swimming or whatever,' cause it was during the summer. And uh, my kid was gone. The next day they came... Well, actually that day she said, we're going to take Trinity to her dad for the night. I said OK. They didn't even drug test me. I never had a drug test so they couldn't prove other than what I said. You know? They would have taken me out to get drug tested but they couldn't, so I never got drug tested. But they still took my kid. They didn't drug test the father, which I know guaran—I

know damn well that he was probably messed right up.

RG: How is your relationship um, with your daughter while, from that point up till now.

AT: Oh, we're great.

RG: So I mean... what are the visitations like?

AT: I can have her now anytime I want. For a while it was supervised visits. I had to have Clay, he was the supervisor, he came to supervise our visits. And that was just like slap in the face. Like I'm going to beat my child, or whatever.

RG: How long did the supervised visits last?

AT: Um, I think it was six months.

RG: And is there any restriction now on how long you can have her for?

AT: No, they can't because, the state's not even involved in mine and Mike's agreement anymore. Because they have no reason to be, on my part. They should be on his. But... but now I'm, I can have her any time I want as long as... as long as it doesn't interfere with school. But my daughter failed this year. My daughter has to stay back this year. She's moved around three times in the last what five months. Three times. She moved, because when he got kicked out of his parent's house they moved to the end of the driveway to a friend's house. They couldn't handle it so he moved to my sister's house. They got into it, and how he's living in a very well known drug house in Princeton.

RG: Have you made reports to DHHS about that?

AT: *(Laughs)* I don't bother anymore because nothing happens. Nothing. He says he's not using but he's getting my child support. I'm paying child support every week. You know? And I can tell when Mike's high. I've seen it in his face. He can try to lie to me all he wants but I can tell when he's using. And even if they drug test him, all he has to say is oh, I still have some of my prescription left. Or, he's on diuretics, and so... that's how I used to pass all my urine tests. I'd take one of his diuretics. I could be high going in there and I'd still go clean. He was on probation, that's how he beat his probation. It's frustrating. He knows the system. He knows how to manipulate it. And I just... there's times I just want to choke him. *(laughs)* Especially when it comes to my daughter. I mean my daughter's bullied every day. Cause she doesn't have a mom to show her to do this... When you're becoming a young lady there's certain things that a woman can teach you. And there's certain things a man can't. Sorry. *(To Bert. Laughs)*. I mean, she's getting her... developing now. Her hygiene sucks. Her clothes are the worst I've

ever seen. I mean she's a big girl. She's chunky. But there's ways to dress nice when you're a chunky girl. Hello! (*gestures at self, laughs*). I know. You know, just... she dresses in boy's clothes a lot. She's a young lady, she wants to be a girly girl. Well now that she's not living with the grandparents she can wear nail polish, she can put on a little make up here and there to fool around you know. But I haven't had the chance to actually teach her all this. It's frustrating. She needs her mom. And I'm sober. I'm working. I'm doing really well in my life. And I still can't do nothing about it. The more I fight the farther it gets away. Especially with the state.

RG: Can you tell me a little bit about, a little more rather, about when you went to the tribe about his using?

AT: Trinity had mentioned to me that her father was shooting up in front of her. I flipped. I tested her. I said, 'so how do you do it?' And she explained it, exactly, precisely, everything, even when you've got to get the flash of blood before you shoot it in. I'm like... how the hell do you know that? She goes, daddy does it in front of me.

RG: How old was she at the time?

AT: Nine. Um, so I'm like, all right, let's go. Cause I was living right across the street from Township Child Welfare. I went in, I saw Karen Davis. Was it Karen, or Anne?... No, it was Karen. Karen sat down with her, had a talk with her, she goes yea, something is wrong April, we need to make um... whatever you call it, a report. It's like, Ok. She put the report in. I waited, I waited. Seven months went by, I went to talk to Karen.... 'Have you heard anything? I need to know what's going on.' Like every month, 'have you heard anything?' Seven months, nothing. Waited, waited, a year and a half later, they finally go talk to her. By then, she's scared. You know, she doesn't know. Her dad's telling her, oh, if you get taken from me you're not going to your mom, we don't know where you'll end up. So she's scared, she changes. So, and I told her 'Trinity don't ever lie to the state.' You know... don't. I was like, when it comes to that kind of stuff... because back in the day, yea, we always told her to lie. You know? She had never seen me use, but she knew I was high. My daughter, my kids have never seen me get high. They've seen me high, obviously because I'd be high all day and all night, as long as I could. But they've never seen me use. I wouldn't allow it. So. I mean if anything, I'd hide and do it. But having my nine-year old daughter come and tell me how to shoot up broke my heart.

When my daughter had to go home after a while and convulsively cry and throw up cause she's so upset she doesn't want to go home? I'm thinking what's going on in that house? Then she told me her grandparents, her grandfather, was very abusive, verbally abusive to her. He sat there and looked at her cause she had nail polish on. 'Oh, you're a whore just like your mother.' She was eight. 'You're a whore just like your mother. You're going to be just like your mother anther Indian whore.' I was just like.... I saw flames that night. It took everything in my not to go up there and do something about it. But I was still using at the time so I couldn't just go get her.

RG: Um, when your daughter was taken by the state, where was your son at this time?



AT: Oh, he's been with his father for a while. When I had decided to get help through the methadone clinic, um, I let him go live with his father. He wanted to live with his dad, I was like OK. I was a big enough person to be like Ok. Cause his father was always abusive to me, never to my son, to our son. He's an amazing father. I couldn't ask for a better father, Charlie is a really good dad. He's got rid of the gambling, all that, he's a good man. Um, plus his mom would beat his ass, (*laughs*). Ruth is quite the powerful woman in that family. He's been with his dad since he was five.

RG: Um, can you tell me a little bit more about the current situation that your daughter is in?

AT: Um, I don't like the place they live. It's a very well known drug center basically. Um, it's disgusting. It's nasty. You haven't been there have you (*looking at Bert*)? Good. You don't want to be. They're supposed to be fixing... basically they're fixing the apartment up while they're living there. She doesn't have her own room. Her and her dad sleep in the living room area. You know... that's Trinity's fault too. Trinity likes, she has to be near one of us when she sleeps. Cause she always has problems sleeping. I think it's... she has um, anxiety I think, issues. She was seeing a counselor um, a child psychologist, on Township... but she's not seeing her anymore because that lady is done. So... hopefully trying to get her into something else. Mike's supposed to be working on it, but I gave him a few weeks. If he doesn't then I'll do it. I need to figure out something better for my child.

RG: Yeah. Um, is he still using currently?

AT: He says he's not, but I don't know. The last time I saw him, when we talked to him (*gesturing at Bert*) he looked high to me. He looked, his eyes were glossy. He smiles too damn much when he's high. His eyes were glossy and whatever. I think he was. But like I said, no drug test or nothing. I can't prove it. I told the state I'd do a drug test every day if you want me to. I said the only drug you'd find in me is nicotine, and I don't even smoke anymore. You know? It's hard. I think he's using I just can't prove it. I can tell when he is. He's got that certain goofy dummy look on his face when he's high.

RG: Well I have two more questions for you. The first one is what would you have wanted, what would you have needed to have made the situation better, both when you were a child and when you were dealing with the state as a parent.

AT: As a child, um, that's a hard one. Back then it was ok to spank your children. Not beat 'em but spank 'em yea. Um, I guess as a child it would be someone to talk to. Yea, when I moved here, I had a child psychologist but I was told... I was told don't you ever frickin tell nobody. I was told I'd be killed. All-right. Not a problem. When I was a child, I was scared to say anything. As dealing now... a better system. Just listen to the other parent. Listen to what I have to say. Don't just write me off "oh, she's just trying to get her daughter back. Oh she's just

an ex wife scorned." Or whatever. That's what I felt like. Like I had no voice in the situation with my daughter. And not having a voice pissed me off. You know? For so many years she's been with her father for I think she was... I can't remember what age she was. I'm not good with dates and stuff. Since then she's been with her father. I get to see her now whenever I want. I can bring her here. I think it's more he wants to have his time so he can get... sedate himself or whatever he wants to do. But...

RG: Ok, now I actually I have two other questions for you. Do you remember the name of the director or the caseworker that you saw when you were dealing with the Tribal child welfare?

AT: Who I talked to? Was Karen Davis.

RG: Thank you. Ok.

AT: No, Karen Davis is the one at the clinic right.

RP: Karen Davis is the doctor.

AT: Yea, no. Karen... Charlie Brown's wife, or girlfriend whatever. Karen... oh shit. I know it's Karen. It's not Brown. I can't remember her last name. But she still works there, at Township. Karen. She's the only Karen there.

RP: At child welfare.

AT: Karen...

RP: *(says something in Penobscot)*

Uh, *Nama. (no in Passamaquoddy)*. Uh...Charlie Brown's wife. Big Charlie Brown that drives the truck. I can't remember her name but she's the only one there. *(RG: That's okay)*. And my aunt Dolly, I talked to Dolly Barnes, my aunt Didi's director. But I spoke to Karen. And then the last investigation that they had on Mike it was Anne Bergen that came with the state worker, and the state workers name was Megan. Megan... Oh, I'm terrible with names.

RG: That's ok.

AT: Um, Megan, I can't remember her name. But it was Megan, I know that. Anne would be able to tell you.

RG: Ok, last question. Um, why did you decide to be involved in this process, or why do you believe it's important to be involved in this process?

AT: Well truthfully Stephanie asked me. She know's what I've been through. Me and Steph, we have, Stephanie Bailey and I, we share a sister. We both have the same sister, but we're not related, but we consider each other sisters. She goes April, you could benefit from this. I was like, eh, you know, whatever. Yea, ok, ok. I'll try it, I'll try. And finally, the gathering we had



at Township, the last one, not the last one, whatever. Um, I was like... hmm. I was sitting home by myself cause all these guys were gone. I was like, hmmm maybe I will. And I've been wanting to like check out at least, and when I went it was powerful. I met so many good people. And then I got to drum. You know, then I got to cook for you guys. It was great. I enjoyed it. Basically it was Stephanie pushing me. She really, she really, she knew it would help and it really did.

RG: Is there anything else you want to add?

AT: Not that I can think of.

RG: Thank you so much. I'm going to stop the recording.

[END OF RECORDING]